A WEDDING-RING, Fit for the FINGER. OR, THE SALVE of DIVINITY, ON THE SORE of HUMANITY.

Laid open in a Sermon at a Wedding in *Edmond*: By *William Secker* Preacher of the Gospel.

LONDON,

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst* at the Bible and 3 Crowns at the Lower end of *Cheapside*, 1678.

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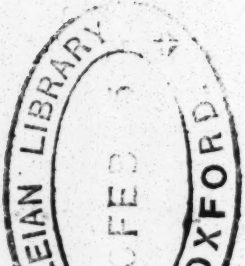
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CHRISTIAN READER,

IT is not good weighing ones worth in such unequal ballances, where the feather of opinion turns the scales. One spoke can never stand still, whilst the whole wheel turns round. The gifts and graces of Christians lay in common. till envy made the first inclosure. Here thou mayest shew thy wisdom in spinning a fine thread out of course wool. Do not hurt him by thy malice, who would help thee in thy Marriage. Who would plant a piece of Ordinance to beat down an Aspen leaf, which having always the palsie,

will fall alone? This piece nei-
ther desires supplanters, nor de-
serves supporters. It comes forth
as a Pressed Soldier, not as a
Volunteer; what it was in
Preaching, it is in publishing;
there is not one cubit added to
its stature: to secure it from
the Avenger of blood, it flies to
thy City of refuge. Let him who
sows his pains, reap thy Pray-
ers.

Thine in the

Lord Iesus

Will. Secker.

Good wine needs no bush they say.
& I no prologue such a play

GEN. 2. 18.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him.

HUman misery is to Divine mercy, as a black foil to a sparkling Diamond, or as a sable cloud to the Sun-beams, Psal. 8. 4. *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!* Man is,

In his Creation, Angelical.
In his Corruption, Diabolical.
In his Renovation, Theological.
In his Translation, Majestical.
An Angel in *Eden*.
A Devil in the World.
A Saint in the Church.
A King in Heaven.

There were four silver Channels in which the crystal streams of Gods affection ran to Man in his Creation.

1. In his Preparation.
2. In his Assimilation.
3. In his Coronation.
4. In his Association.

1. In his *Preparation* : Other Creatures received the Charter of their Beings by a simple *fiat*; but there was a consultation at his forming, not for the difficulty, but for the dignity of the work. The Painter is most studious about that which he means to make his master-piece. The Four Elements were taken out of their Elements to make up the perfection of man's complexion; The Fire was purified, the Air was clarified, the Water was purged, the Earth was refined; when Man was moulded Heaven and Earth was married; Body from the one was espoused to a Soul from the other.

2. I

2. In his *Assimilation*: Other creatures were made like themselves, but Man was made like God, as the wax hath the impression of the seal set upon it. It is admirable to behold so fair a Picture in such course canvas, & so bright a character in so brown paper.

3. In his *Coronation*: He that made Man and all the rest, made man over all the rest; *quantillum Dominum posuit Deus in tantum dominium*, he was a little Lord of a great Lordship; this King was crowned in his Cradle.

4. In his *Association*: Society is the solace of humanity: the world would be a desart without a consort.

Most of Mens parts are made in pairs; now he that was double in his perfection, must not be single in his condition, *and the Lord God said, &c.*

These words are like the Iron gate that opened to *Peter* of its own

own accord; dividing themselves into three parts.

1. An Introduction, *And the Lord God said,*

2. An Assertion, *'Tis not good that Man should be alone.*

3. A Determination, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In the first, ther's a Majesty proposed.

In the second, there's a malady presented.

In the third, there's a remedy provided.

Once more let me put these grapes into the press.

1. The soveraignness of the expression, *And the Lord God said.*

2. The solitariness of the condition, *'Tis not good, &c.*

3. The suitableness of the provision, *I will make, &c.*

In the first, there's the worth of *Veracity.*

In the second, there's the want of *Society.*

In

In the third, there's the work of *Divinity.*

Of these in their order.

And first of the first.

First, the Soveraignness of the expression, *And the Lord God said.*

Luke 1. 70 As he spake by the mouth of his Prophets. In other Scriptures he used their mouths, but in this he makes use of his own: they were the Organs; and he the breath; the early streams,& he the Fountain. How he spake, 'tis hard to be spoken, whether eternally, or internally, or externally. *Quomodo non est quod quæramus, sed potius quid dixerit intelligamus*; we are not to enquire to the manner of speaking, but to the matter that's spoken; which leads me like a directing-star from the Suburbs to the City, from the Porch to the Palace, from the Founder of the Mine, to the Treasure that is in it, *It is not good, &c.*

In

In which you have two things.

1. The Subject.
2. The Predicate.

The Subject, *Man alone.*

The Predicate, *'Tis not good* &c.

First, the Subject, *Man alone* take this in two branches.

1. As it is limited to one Man.
2. As it is lengthened to all Men.

First, As 'tis limited to one Man, and so it is taken particularly: Man, for the first Man. When all other Creatures had their Mates, *Adam* wanted his: Though he was the Emperor of the Earth, and the Admiral of the Seas, yet in Paradise without a Companion; though he was truly happy, yet he was not fully happy; Though he had enough for his board, yet he had not enough for his bed: Though he had many Creatures to serve him, yet he wanted a Creature to solace him; when he was

was compounded in Creation, he must be complicated by Conjunction; when he had no sin to hurt him, then he must have a Wife to help him: *It is not good that Man should be alone.*

Secondly, as it's lengthned to all Men, and so its taken universally, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable unto all*, not only νόμιμος but τίμιος. Its not only warrantable, but honourable. The whole Trinity hath conspired together to set a Crown of Glory upon the head of Matrimony.

1. *God the Father:* Marriage was a Tree planted within the Walls of Paradise, this flower first grew in Gods Garden.

2. *The Son*: Marriage is a Crystal glass, wherein Christ and the Saints do see each others faces.

3. *The Holy Ghost*, by his overshadowing of the blessed Virgin. Well might the world when it saw

saw her pregnancy, suspect her Virginity; but her Matrimonial condition was a grave to that suspition; without this her innocency had not prevented her infamy; she needed a shield to defend that chastity abroad, which was kept inviolable at home.

Too many that have not worth enough to preserve their virginity, have yet will enough to cover their unchastity; turning the medicine of frailty, into the mantle of filthiness. Certainly she is mad that cuts off her Leg to get her a Crutch, or that venomes her Face to wear a Mask.

St. *Paul* makes it one of the Characters of those that should cashier the faith, 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. Not to forbear Marriage, which may be lawful; but to forbid it, which is sinful.

One of the Popes of *Rome* sprinkles this unholy drop upon it, *carnis pollutionem & immunditiem.*

It's

It's ſtrange that ſhould be a pollution, which was ordained before corruption; or that impurity, which was ordained in the ſtate of innocency: or that they ſhould make that to be a ſin, which they make to be a Sacrament.

But a Baſtard may be laid at the door of chaſtity; and a leaden crown ſet upon a golden head.

Bellarmine that mighty *Atlas* of the Papal power, blows his ſtinking breath upon it, ſaying, Better were it for a Prieſt to defile himſelf to many Harlots, then to be Married to one wife. Theſe children of the purple whore prefer their Monaſteries before our Marriages; a Concubine before a Companion. They uſe too many for their luſts, to chooſe any for their love: Their Tables are ſo largely ſpread, that they cannot feed upon one diſh.

As for their exalting of a Virgin-

ſtate,

ſtate, it's like him that commended faſting when he had filled his belly.

Who knows not, that Virginity is a pearl of ſparkling luſtre? But cannot the one be ſet up, without the other be thrown down? will no oblation pacifie the former, but the demoliſhing of the latter? Though we find many enemies to the choice of Marriage, yet its rare to find any enemies to the uſe of Marriage. They would pick the lock that want the key, and pluck the fruit that do not plant the Tree.

The *Hebrews* have a ſaying, *He is not a Man, that hath not a Woman.*

Though they climbe too high a bough; yet its to be feared that ſuch fleſh is full of imperfection that is not tending propagation; Though man alone may be good yet *it is not good that man ſhould be alone*; which leads me from the

Subject

Subject to the Predicate, *It is not good, &c.*

Non bonum, is not in this place as *malum*, but *bonum est honestum, utile, jucundum.*

Now it is not good that Man should be in a single condition, upon a threefold consideration.

1. In respect of sin, which would not else be prevented. Marriage is like water, to quench the sparks of lusts fire, 1 *Corinth.* 7. 2. *Nevertheless to avoid Fornication, let every one have his own Wife, &c.* Man needed no such Physick when he was in perfect health. Temptations may break natures best sence, and lay its Paradise waste; but a single life is a prison of unruly desires, which is daily attempted to be broken open.

Some indeed force themselves to a single life meerly to avoid the charges of a Married state; they had rather fry in the grease of their own sensuality, then extinguish

those flames with an allowed remedy; *It's better to marry than to burn*: to be lawfully coupled, than to be lustfully scorched. It's best feeding these flames with ordinate fewel.

2. 'Tis not good in respect of Mankind, which then would not be propagated. The *Roman* Historian relating the ravishing of the *Sabine* Women, excused it thus: *Res erat unius ætatis populus virorum*: without them Mankinde would fall from the Earth and perish. Marriages do turn mutability into the image of eternity: it springs up new buds, when the old are withered. It's a greater honour for a man to be the Father of one Son, than to be the Master of many Servants. Without Wife, Children cannot be had lawfully; without a good Wife Children cannot be had comfortably. Man and Woman, as the stock and the scion, being grafted

by Marriage, are trees bearing fruit to the World.

S. *Auguſtine* ſays, this pair is, *primum far & fundamentum omnium, &c.*

They are the firſt link of Human Society to which all the reſt are joyned. Mankind had long ago decayed and been like a Tabor fallen into the ſocket, if thoſe breaches which are made by Mortality, were not repaired by Matrimony.

3. 'Tis not good in regard of the Church, which could not then have been expatiated. Where there is no Generation, there can be no Regeneration.

Nature makes us Creatures, before Grace makes us Chriſtians.

If the loins of Men had been leſs fruitful, the death of Chriſt would have been leſs ſucceſsful.

It was a witty queſtion that one put to him that ſaid, Marriages fills the Earth, but Virginity fills

the Heavens. How can the Heavens be full, if the Earth be empty?

Had *Adam* lived in Innocency without Matrimony, there would have been no Servants of God in the Church Militant, nor no Saints with God in the Church Triumphant. But I will not sink this Vessel by the over-burthening of it, nor press this truth to death by laying too great a load upon its shoulders.

There is one knot which I must untie before I make a farther progress, 1 *Cor.* 7. 1. *It is good for a Man not to touch a Woman.*

Do all the Scriptures proceed out of the same mouth, and do they not all speak the same truth? the God of unity will not indite discord; and the God of verity cannot assert falshood. If good and evil be contraries, how contrary then are these Scriptures? Either *Moses* mistakes God, or *Paul* mistakes

miſtakes *Moſes* about the point of Marriage.

To which I ſhall give a double anſwer.

1. There is a publique and a private good. In reſpect of one man, it may be good not to touch a Woman, but in reſpect of all, *So it is not good that the Man ſhould be alone.*

2. *Moſes* ſpeaks of the ſtate of man created, *Paul* of the ſtate of man corrupted: now that which by inſtitution was a mercy, may by corruption become a miſery; as pure water is tainted by running through a miry channel: or as the Sun beams receive a tincture by ſhining through a coloured glaſs. Ther's no print of evil in the World, but ſin was the ſtamp that made it. They that ſeek nothing but weal in its commiſſion, will find nothing but wo in the concluſion. Which leads me from the ſolitarineſs of the condition,

man alone, to the suitableness of the provision, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In which you have two parts.

1. The Agent, *I will make.*
2. The Object, *a help.*

First, The Agent, *I will make.*

We cannot build a house without tools, but the Trinity is at liberty;

Dei verbum tantum.

To Gods omniscience ther's nothing invisible, and to God's omnipotence there's nothing impossible.

We work by hands without, but he works without hands. He that made man meet for help, makes a meet help for man.

Marriages are consented above but consummated below, *Prov.* 18. 22. Though man wants supply, yet man cannot supply his wants, *James* 1. 17. *Every good*

and perfect gift comes from above, &c. A wife though she be not a perfect gift, yet she is a good gift. These beams are darted from the Sun of Righteousness.

Hast thou a soft heart? it's of Gods breaking: Hast thou a sweet wife? she's of Gods making.

Let me draw up this expression with a double Application.

1. When thou layest out for such a good on earth, look up to the God of Heaven. Let him make thy choice for thee, who hath made his choice for thee. Look above you, before you look about you. Nothing makes up the happiness of a married condition, like the holiness of a mortified disposition. Account not those the most worthy, that are the most wealthy. Art thou matched to the Lord? match in the Lord. How happy are such Marriages where Christ is at the Wedding! Let none but those

those who have found favour in Gods eyes, finde favour in yours.

2. Give God the tribute of you gratulation for your good companions. Take heed of paying your rent to a wrong Land-Lord: When you taste of the stream, reflect on the spring that feeds it. Now thou hast four eyes for thy speculation; four hands for thy operation, four feet for thy ambulation, and four shoulders for thy sustentation, What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in point of Divinity, that is unthankfulness in point of Morality, an offence unpardonable. Pity it is but that Moon should be ever in an Eclipse, that will not acknowledg her beams to be borrowed from the Sun. He that praises not the giver, prizes not the gift: and so I pass from the Agent to the Object, *a help.*

Our

She must be so much, and no less; and so much, and no more. Our Ribs were not ordained to be our Rulers. They are not made of the head; to claim superiority, but out of the side, to be content with equality. They desert the Author of Nature, that invert the order of Nature. The Woman was made for the Mans comfort; but the Man was not made for the Womans command. Those shoulders aspire too high, that content not themselves with a room below their head. Its between a Man and his Wife in the house, as it is between the Sun and the Moon in the Heavens; when the greater Light goes down, the lesser Light gets up; when the one ends in setting, the other begins in shining. The Wife may be a Soveraign in her Husbands absence, but she must be subject in her Husbands presence. As *Pharoah* said to *Joseph*, so should the Husband say to his Wife, *Gen.*

41. 40.

41. 40. Thou ſhalt be over my Houſe, and according to thy word ſhall all my people be ruled; only in the Throne will I be greater then thou. The body of that Houſhold can never make any good motion, whoſe bones are out of place. The Woman muſt be a help to the Man in theſe four things.

1. To his *Piety*. 2. So his *Society*.

3. To his *Progeny*. 4. To his *Proſperity*

To his *Piety*, by the ſerventneſs of her excitation. To his *Society*, by the fragrantneſs of her converſation. To his *Progeny*, by the fruitfulneſſe of her education. To his *Proſperity*, by the faithfulneſs of her preſervation.

1. To his *Piety* by the ſerventneſs of her excitation, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7.

Husband and Wife ſhould be as the two Milch-kine, which were coupled together to carry the Ark

of

of God; or as the two Cherubims that looked one upon another, and both upon the Mercy-seat: or as the two Tables of stone, on each of which were engraven the Laws of God. In some families Married persons are like *Jeremiah*'s two baskets of figs, one very good the other very evil; or like fire and water, whilst the one is flaming in devotion, the other is freezing in corruption. There is a twofold hindrance of holiness; first of the right side; secondly, on the left; on the right side, when the Wife would run in Gods way, the Husband will not let her go: when the fore-horse in a Team will not draw, he wrongs all the rest; when the General of an Army forbids a March, all the Soldiers stand still. Sometimes on the left; How did *Solomon*'s Idolatrous Wife, draw away his heart from Heaven? A sinning Wife was Satan's first Ladder, by which he

ſcaled the Walls of Paradiſe, and took away the Fort-Royal of *Adam*'s heart from him. Thus ſhe that ſhould have been the help of his fleſh, was the hurt of his faith: His natures under-propper, becomes his graces underminer; and ſhe that ſhould be a Crown on the head, is a croſs on the ſhoulders. The Wife is often to the husband, as the Ivy is to the Oak, which draws away his ſap from him.

2. A help to his *Society* by the fragrantneſs of her converſation.

Man is an affectionate creature; now the womans behaviour ſhould be ſuch towards the Man, as to requite his affection by increaſing his delectation. That the new-born love may not be blaſted, as ſoon as its bloſſomed; that it may not be ruined before it be rooted. A Spouſe ſhould carry her ſelf ſo to her Husband as not to diſturb his love

love by her contention, nor to destroy his love by her alienation. Husband and Wife should be like two Candles burning together, which makes the house more lightsome; or like two fragrant flowers, bound up in one Nosegay, that augment its sweetness; or like two well tuned Instruments, which sounding together, makes the more melodious musick. Husband and Wife, what are they but as as two springs meeting, and so joyning their streams that they make but one current? It's an unpleasing spectacle to view any contention in this Conjunction.

3. To his *Progeny* by the fruitfulness of her education; that so her Children in the flesh, may be God's Children in the Spirit, 1. *Sam.* 1. 11. *Hanna* she vows if the Lord will give her a Son, by bearing him, she will return that Son to the Lord by serving him. A Spouse should be more careful of

her Childrens breeding, then she should be fearful of her Childrens bearing. Take heed left these flowers grow in the Devil's Garden. Though you bring them out in corruption, yet do not bring them up to damnation. Those are not Mothers, but Monsters, that whilst they should be teaching their Children the way to Heaven with their lips, are leading them the way to Hell with their lives.

Good education is the best Livery you can give them living; and its the best Legacy you can leave them dying. You let out your cares to make them great, O lift up your prayers to make them good: That before you die from them, you may see Christ live in them.

Whilst these twigs are green and tender, they should be bowed towards God. Children and Servants are in a Family, as Passengers are in a Boat; Husband and Wife

Wife they are as a pair of Oars, to row them to their desired Haven. Let these small pieces of Timber be hewed, and squared for the Celestial building. By putting a Scepter of grace into their hands, you will set a Crown of Glory upon their heads.

4. A help to his Prosperity by her faithful preservation, being not a wanderer abroad, but a worker at home.

One of the Ancients speaks excellently; She must not be a Field-Wife, like *Dinah*; nor a Street-Wife, like *Thamar*; nor a Window-Wife, like *Jezabel*.

Phideas when he drew a Woman painted her sitting under a Snail-shell, that she might imitate that little creature, that goes no farther then it can carry its house upon its head.

How many Women are there, that are not labouring Bees, but Idle Drones; that take up a room

in the Hive, but bring no Honey to it; that are Moths to their Husbands eſtates; ſpending, when they ſhould be ſparing? as the Man's part is to provide induſtriouſly, ſo the Womans is to preſerve diſcreetly; the one muſt not be careleſly wanting, the other muſt not be cauſleſly waſting: the Man muſt be ſeeking with diligence, the Woman muſt be ſaving with providence. The Cock and Hen both ſcrape together in the Duſt-heap, to pick up ſomething for their little Chickens.

To winde up this on a ſhort bottom.

1. If the Woman be a help to the Man, then let not the Man caſt durt on the Woman.

Secundus being asked his opinion of a woman, ſpeaks thus, *Viri naufragium, domus tempeſtas, quietis impedimentum, &c.* But ſurely he was a Monſter, and not a Man, fitter for a Tomb to bury him, then

a

a Womb to bear him.

Some have ſtiled them to be,
Like Clouds in the Sky.
Like Motes in the Sun.
Like Snuffs in the Candle.
Like Weeds in the Garden.

It is not good to play the Butcher with that naked Sex, that hath no arms but for imbraces. A Preacher ſhould not be ſilent for thoſe, who are ſilenced from Preaching; becauſe they are the weaker veſſels, ſhall they be broken all to pieces? Thou that ſayeſt women are evil, it may be thy expreſſion flows from thy experience; but I ſhall never take that Mariner for my Pilot, that hath no better knowledge then the ſplitting of his own Ship. Wilt thou condemn the frame of all, for the fault of one? as if it were true Logick, becauſe ſome are evil, therefore none are good. He hath ill eyes that diſdains all objects. To blaſt thy helper, is to blame thy Maker.

In a word, we took our riſe from their bowels, and may take our reſt in their boſoms.

2. Is the Woman to be a help to the Man? Then let the Man be a help to the Woman. What makes theſe Debtors be ſuch ill Pay-Maſters? but becauſe they look at what is owing to them, but not at what is owing by them? If thou wouldſt have thy wifes reverence, let her have thy reſpect. To force a fear from this Relation, is that which neither befits the Husbands authority to injoyn, nor the Wifes duty to perform. A Wife muſt not be ſharply driven, but ſweetly drawn. Compaſſion may bend her, but compulſion will break her. Husband and Wife ſhould act towards each other with conſent, not by conſtraint.

There are four things wherein the Husband is a meet help to the Wife.

Firſt, in his protecting of her from

from injuries. It's well obſerved by one, that the rib of which Woman was made, was taken from under the Man's arm : as the uſe of the arm is to keep off blows from the body, ſo the office of the Husband is to ward off blows from the Wife: The Wife is the Husbands treaſury, and the Husband ſhould be the Wifes Armory. In darkneſs he ſhould be her Sun for direction ; in danger he ſhould be her ſhield for protection.

Secondly, In his providing for her neceſſities. The Husband muſt communicate maintenance to the Wife, as the head conveys influence to the Member, thou muſt not be a drone, and ſhe a drudge. A Man in a Married eſtate, is like a Chamberlain in an Inne, there's knocking for him in every Room. Many perſons in this condition, waſt that eſtate in Luxury, which ſhould ſupply their Wifes neceſ-

ſity.

ſity. *Nec amor viget mariti, nec fides Chriſtiani*; they have neither the Faith of a Chriſtian, nor the Love of a Husband. It's a ſad ſpectacle, to ſee a Virgin ſold with her own money unto ſlavery, when Services are better then Marriages; The one receives Wages, whilſt the other buys their Fetters.

3. In his covering of her Infirmities. Who would trample upon a Jewel becauſe it's fallen in the dirt? or throw away a heap of Wheat, for a little Chaff? or deſpiſe a Golden Wedg, becauſe it retains ſome droſs? Theſe Roſes have their prickles. Now Husbands ſhould ſpread a mantle of Charity over their Wives Infirmities. They be ill Birds that defile their own Neſts. It's a great deal better you ſhould faſt, then feaſt your ſelves upon their failings. Some Husbands are never well, longer then they are holding their fingers in their Wives ſores. Such are like Crows

Crows, that faſten only on Carrion. Do not put out the Candle, becauſe of the Snuff. If the Gold be good, allow it *Grains*. Husband and Wives ſhould provoke one another to love; and they ſhould love one another notwithſtanding of provocation. Take heed of poyſoning thoſe Springs, from whence the ſtreams of your pleaſure flows.

4. By his delighting in her Society: A Wife takes Sanctuary, not only in her Husbands houſe, but in his heart. The Tree of Love ſhould grow up in the family, as the Tree of Life grew up in the Garden. They that chuſe their love, ſhould love their *choice*. They that Marry where they affect not, will affect where they Marry not. Two joyned together without love, are but two tyed together to make one another miſerable. And ſo I paſſe to the laſt ſtage of the Text, *A help meet*.

A help, there's her fulneſs; *meet help*, there's her fitneſs.

The Angels were too much above him; The Creatures were too much below him, he could not ſtep up to the former, nor could he ſtoop down to the latter: The one was out of his reach, the other was out of his race: but the Woman is a parallel-line drawn equal with him: meet ſhe muſt be in three things.

1. In the Harmony of her diſpoſition. Husband and Wife ſhould be like the Image in a Looking-glaſs, that anſwers in all properties to the face that ſtands before it; or like an Eccho that returneth the voice it receiveth. Many Marriages are like putting new Wine into old bottles. An old man is not a meet help for a young Woman. He that ſets a gray head upon green ſhoulders, hath one foot in the Grave, and another in the Cradle. Yet how many times do

do you see the spring of youth, wedded to the winter of old age? A young person, is not a meet help for an old Woman; raw flesh is but an ill plaister for rotten bones. He that in his non-age, marries another in her dotage, his lust hath one Wife in possession, but his love another in reversion.

2. In the Herauldry of her condition. Some of our *Europian* Nations, are so strict in their Junctions, that its against their laws, for the Commonalty to couple with the Gentry.

It was well said by one: if the Wife be too much above her husband, she either ruins him by her vast expences, or reviles him with her base reproaches: If she be too much below her husband, either her former condition makes her too generous, or her present mutation makes her too imperious.

Marriages are styled Matches; yet amongst those many that are Married,

Married, how few are there that are matched? Husbands and wives are like locks and keys, that rather break then open, except the wards be answerable.

3. In the holiness of her Religion. *If* Adultery may separate a Marriage contracted, Idolatry may hinder a Marriage not perfected. Cattle of divers kinds were not to ingender, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. *Be not unequally yoaked, &c.* It's dangerous taking her for a wife, who will not take God for a Husband. It is not meet that one flesh should be of two spirits. Is there never a Tree thou likest in the Garden, but that which bears forbidden fruit? There are but two Channels in which the remaining streams shall run.

1. To those Men that want wives, how to choose them.

2. To those women that have Husbands how to use them.

First, To those Men that want wives,

wives, how to chooſe them.

Marriage is the tying of ſuch a knot, that nothing but death can unlooſe. Common reaſon ſuggeſts ſo much, that we ſhould be long a doing, that which can but once be done. Where one deſign hath been gravelled in the Sands of delay, thouſands have been ſplit upon the Rock of Precipitance. Raſh adventures, yields little gain. Opportunities are not like tides, that when one is paſt, another returns; but yet take heed of flying without your wings; you may breed ſuch Agues in your bones, that may ſhake you to your graves.

1. Let me preſerve you from a bad choice.

2. Preſent you with a good one.

1. To preſerve you from a bad choice. Take that in three things.

1. Chooſe not for Beauty.

2. Chooſe not for Dowry.

3. Chooſe not for Dignity.

He that looks for Beauty, buys a Picture.

He that loves for Dowry, makes a Purchaſe.

He that leaps for Dignity, matches with a multitude at once.

The firſt of theſe is too blinde to be directed.

The ſecond, too baſe to be accepted.

The third, too bold to be reſpected.

1. Chooſe not by your eyes.
2. Chooſe not by your hands.
3. Chooſe not by your eares.

Firſt, Chooſe not by your eyes, looking at the beauty of the perſon. Not but that this is lovely in a Woman; but that this is not all for which a Woman ſhould be beloved. He that had the choice of many faces, ſtamps this Character upon them all; *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.* The Sun is more bright in a clear Sky, than when

when the Horizon is clouded. But if a Womans fleſh hath more of Beauty, than her ſpirit hath of Chriſtianity, it's like poyſon in ſweet meats, moſt dangerous, *Gen.* 6. 2. *The Sons of God ſaw the Daughters of men that they were fair*, &c. One would have thought, that they ſhould rather have looked for grace in the heart, then for beauty in the face. Take heed of Inning at the faireſt ſigns: The Swan hath black fleſh under her white feathers.

Secondly, Chooſe not by your hands, for the bounty of the Portion.

When *Cato*'s Daughter was asked, why ſhe did not Marry, ſhe thus replyed; She could not finde the Man that loved her Perſon above her Portion. Men love curious pictures, but they would have them ſet in Golden frames. Some are ſo degenerate, as to think any to be good enough, who

have but goods enough. Take heed, for ſometimes the Bag and Baggage go together. The Perſon ſhould be a figure, and the Portion a Cypher, which added to her, advances the ſum, but alone, ſignifies nothing. When *Themiſtocles* was to marry his daughter, two Suitors courted her together, the one rich, and a fool; the other wiſe, but poor; and being demanded which of the two he had rather his daughter ſhould have, he anſwered, *Malem virum ſine pecuniâ*, &c. I had rather ſhe ſhould have a Man without Money, than Money without a Man.

Thirdly, Chooſe not by your ears, for the dignity of her Parentage. A good old ſtock may nouriſh a fruitleſs branch. There are many Children who are not the bleſſings, but the blemiſhes of their parents. They are Nobly deſcended, but Ignobly minded. Such was *Aurelius Antonius*, of

of whom it was ſaid, that he injured his Country in nothing, but in being the Father of ſuch a Child. There are many low in their deſcents, that are high in their deſerts. Such was the Cobler's Son, who grew to be a famous Captain; when a great perſon upbraided the meanneſſe of his original, my Nobility (ſaith he) begins with me, but thy Nobility ends with thee. Piety is a greater honour then Parentage. She is the beſt Gentlewoman that is heir of her own deſerts, and not the degenerated off-ſpring of anothers vertue.

2. To preſent you with a good choice; in three things.

1. Chooſe ſuch a one as will be ſubject to your dominion. Take heed of yoking your ſelves with untamed Heifers.

2. Chooſe ſuch a one as may ſympathize with you in your affliction. Marriage is juſt like a Sea-voyage; he that enters into

this

this Ship, muſt look to meet with ſtorms and tempeſts, 1 *Cor.* 7. 28. *They that marry ſhall have trouble in the fleſh.* Fleſh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no; now a bitter cup is too much to be drunk by one mouth. A heavy burthen is eaſily carried by the aſſiſtance of other ſhoulders. Husband and Wife ſhould neither be proud fleſh, nor dead fleſh. You are fellow-members, therefore ſhould have a fellow-feeling. While one ſtands ſafe on the ſhore, the other ſhould pitty him that is toſt on the Sea. Sympathy in ſuffering, is like a dry houſe in a wet day.

3. Chooſe ſuch a one as may be ſerviceable to your Salvation. A man may think he hath a Saint, when he hath a Devil; but take heed of a Harlot that is falſe to thy bed; and of a Hypocrite, that is falſe to thy God.

Secondly, To thoſe Women that

that have Husbands, how to uſe them. In two things.

1. Carry your ſelves towards them with Obedience. Let their power command you, that their praiſe may commend you. Though you may have your Husbands hearts, yet you muſt not have their heads; as you will his love, ſo you ſhould love his will. Till the Husband leaves commanding, the Wife muſt never leave obeying. As his injunctions muſt be lawful, ſo her ſubjection muſt be loyal.

2. With faithfulneſs. In Creation, God made not one woman for many Men, nor many women for one Man: Every wife ſhould be to her Husband, as *Evah* was to *Adam*, a whole world of women; and every Husband ſhould be to his wife, as *Adam* was to *Evah*, a whole world of men. When a River is divided into many channels, the main current ſtarves. To

To conclude : Good ſervan
are a great bleſſing; good Chi
dren, a greater bleſſing : but
good wife is the greate t bleſſing
and ſuch a help let him ſeek fo
her that wants one, let him ſig
for her that hath loſt one, let hi
take pleaſure in her that enjoye
one. *And the Lord God ſaid, I*
is n.t good, &c.

FINIS.